



# The Conservation Strip

## John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District

### 2020 Cost-Share Program

Summer 2019

The John Marshall SWCD will be receiving \$2.1 million in cost-share this fiscal year. This unprecedented level of cost-share is due to the changes made in Virginia’s Watershed Implementation Plan and the effort to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Many changes are occurring for the 2020 Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program including changes to some of the most popular practices.

One major change will be in our stream exclusion program. Stream exclusion practices (previously known as SL-6s) will now be split into two

practices: SL-6N for narrow buffers (when the fence is placed 10 to 25 feet from the top of the streambank) and SL-6W for wide buffers (where the fence is placed 35+ feet from the top of the streambank). There will now be an option to have a 10 or a 15 year contract and the cost-share rate will vary based on the setback from the stream and the length of the contract. Additionally, a buffer payment rate of \$80 per acre per year will be paid for all acreage contained within the fence on SL-6W practices. The tables below explain the breakdown for each practice.

Minimum fence setback	Lifespan	Cost-share rate
25 feet	15 years	75%
	10 years	70%
10 feet	15 years	65%
	10 years	60%

Cost-share rate table for SL-6N (narrow buffer) practice.

The Continuing Conservation Initiative (CCI) program has been modified as well. CCI will pay \$0.50 per linear foot of streambank protected, no matter how far from the stream the fence exists. Two new practices are the CCI-SL-6N and CCI-SL-6W which can be used to extend the life of existing SL-6 practices. The CCI-SL-6N is for buffers

Minimum fence setback	Lifespan	Cost-share rate	Buffer payment rate	Buffer payment cap
50 feet	15 years	100%	\$80 per acre per year	\$12,000
	10 years	95%		\$8,000
35 feet	15 years	90%		\$12,000
	10 years	85%		\$8,000

which are 10 to 25 feet wide and will pay 0.75 per linear foot of streambank protected, \$250 per trough, \$500 per

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Cost-share rate table for SL-6W (wide buffer) practice.

#### Mission Statement

Our Mission is to provide leadership, technical assistance, information, and education to the citizens of Fauquier County in proper soil stewardship, agricultural conservation methods, and water quality protection so as to ensure the wise use of the county’s natural resources.



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# 2020 Cost-Share Program continued...

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stream crossing and \$1,000 per water system. The CCI-SL-6W (which has buffers 35+ feet wide) will pay \$1.25 per linear foot of streambank protected and will pay the same rates as the CCI-SL-6N for all other components.

One final change is that the cap (maximum amount that can be paid out) for all practices has been raised to \$100,000.

For more information on the cost-share program or to sign up, please call the JMSWCD office at 540-347-3120 x3.



*Fencing seen here creates a riparian buffer and excludes livestock from a segment of Fiery Run.*

## Management for Grassland and Shrubland Birds

Virginia Working Landscapes and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute have put together a guide with recommendations of how to manage lands for grassland and shrubland birds. The recommendations include:

1. If possible, delay field maintenance until mid-July. If circumstances require you to cut earlier, try to do so by late-May and wait at least 65 days before the next cut.
2. If you have fields that are managed once annually, the best time of year to bush-hog is Feb. 15 to Apr. 1.
3. If circumstances require you to mow during the breeding season, focus on smaller fields first and work your way up to larger fields (>30 acres). Large fields have a higher density of grassland birds.
4. Manage fields in patches (i.e. Burn or cut 1/3 of field per year) to leave varying structure and cover.
5. Incorporate native grasses, forbs, and legumes into your fields to provide foraging opportunities and protective cover.
6. Promote connectivity of grasslands between

neighboring farms. Large expanses of connected grasslands are important for grassland obligates.

7. Follow low intensity or rotational grazing practices, as this improves insect availability and provides favorable foraging conditions for grassland birds.
8. Modify cutting speed and pattern by mowing your field slowly in a spiraling motion from the inside of the field outwards. This allows the birds time and space to escape. Avoid mowing at night.
9. Increase cutting height to a minimum of 6-8 inches. This leaves protective cover for nesting grassland birds and their fledglings and also helps promote healthy root systems.
10. Attach flushing bars to the front of your tractor (dangling chains) to flush young birds in your mower's path.
11. Hang nest boxes for cavity-nesting species like American Kestrels, Barn Owls, and Eastern Bluebirds.

The full guide is available at: <http://www.vaworkinglandscapes.org/education/274-field-management-guidelines-grassland-birds>.

# JMSWCD Staffing Changes

The John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District is currently undergoing a number of staffing changes. The first change is that Claire Hilsen has left the District. She and her husband have moved to be closer to family. Claire spent 10 years with the District as a Conservation Specialist. In those 10 years, she helped work with farmers to protect hundreds of thousands of feet of stream bank and prevent erosion on thousands of acres of cropland. Claire will certainly be missed.



*Claire Hilsen was with the district for 10 years*

During this time, she also was the lead researcher on a National Park Service contract to assess the impacts of hunting at New River Gorge National River, West Virginia. Melissa is looking forward to re-exploring Fauquier County with her husband, Joe, and their two daughters, Sarah and Mattie. During her free time, Melissa enjoys spending time with her family, refinishing furniture, and knitting.

Our second new staff member is John Prizzi who will be working on the Goose Creek TMDL. John packed his bags and thumbed his way from Boston, Massachusetts to Warrenton for the first of July. He spent the last year and half working with MIT to plan and design urban greenspace in the cities of Boston and Cambridge as well as educate citizens about the importance of living with respect for the environment we all inhabit. He earned his MS in Land and Soils System Management from the University of British Columbia, his project focusing on the effects of local climate change on bacterial contamination in rural watersheds and ultimately the future of recreation and shellfish consumption in the Nooksack River Watershed and Portage Bay estuary. John was excited to learn that his thesis had real-world implications and cannot wait to explore the bountiful watersheds and landscapes that comprise his new home. When he's not avoiding tick-bites and paperwork, John enjoys fly-fishing, unicycling amongst the cows, and a strong cup of coffee.

Please be sure to welcome our new employees to the district!



*Melissa Allen has rejoined the district*



*John Prizzi will be working on the Goose Creek TMDL*

**John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District**

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Hours: 7:30 am-4:30 pm  
Monday-Friday

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Roger Flint  
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# Fall Cover Crops

It's never too early to start thinking about covering your fields this fall. The District is offering financial incentives to establish vegetative cover on cropland. You could receive **\$15 to \$48** per acre for using this best management practice, depending on the cover species, planting date, and harvest option. See the table below for more information. Cover crop and related practices are limited to a statewide payment of **\$100,000** per individual/farm.

	Non-Harvestable Small Grain	Harvestable Small Grain
What can be planted?	Tetraploid Rye, Winter Rye, Winter Wheat, Winter Barley, Winter Hardy Oats, Winter Annual Ryegrass, Triticale	
Must Be Planted By	November 1	October 10
Base Cost-Share Rate	\$15/ac	\$20/ac
Early Planting Date	October 10	None
Early Planting Bonus	\$25/ac	None
Rye Variety Bonus	\$8/ac	None
60% Cover By	December 1	
Stand Must Be Maintained Until	March 15	

Working together, we hope to prevent the loss of valuable nutrients, reduce erosion, improve soil health, and reduce the leaching of pollutants to groundwater, building a more sustainable agricultural community. District staff are available to help farmers apply for funding to assist in the implementation of cover crop best management practices.

For more information, contact the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District at 540-347-3120 x 3 or [johnmarshall.swcd@vaswcd.org](mailto:johnmarshall.swcd@vaswcd.org).

## Calendar of Events

July 4 & 5	John Marshall SWCD Office Closed		
July 10	4:00 PM	<del>John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting</del>	CANCELLED
August 14	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office
September 2	John Marshall SWCD Office Closed		
September 11	4:00 PM	John Marshall SWCD Board Meeting	JMSWCD Office

**Staying Connected:** The John Marshall SWCD makes it easy to stay connected through social media. If you're on Facebook, "Like" our page to get more-frequent updates on what's happening at the District.



The Conservation Strip is a quarterly publication of the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District. To be added to our email list, please send an email to Wendy Merwin at: [wendy.merwin@fauquiercounty.gov](mailto:wendy.merwin@fauquiercounty.gov).

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